Creating Local Outreach Materials

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Web site contains materials that are generic, free, and available for order or download at http://snap.ntis.gov/. They may be customized with a sticker or a rubber stamp to add your organization's name and phone number or other contact information. In the event that these materials do not meet your need, there is an abundance of existing materials available at the local and State level that complement FNS informational materials. A community needs assessment can help you learn what local materials other organizations are using. However, there will still be times when you must create your own. This guide is designed to help you.

Before you begin...

Please keep in mind that not all State agencies use the Federal name, SNAP. Some States have their own name and you will need to make sure your materials reflect the State name.

Before embarking on an outreach effort in your community, it's important to develop partnerships with local SNAP offices for a number of reasons, including:

- SNAP offices may be willing to provide State informational materials, including application forms. These may contain State-specific information about Program requirements.

- SNAP offices that know about local community outreach efforts can plan to handle the increase in telephone calls or applications.

Step 1 Make a plan.

Describe:

- Who is your target audience? Whom exactly are you trying to reach?

- Why is the material needed? Do other partners have existing materials that can be used?

- What information do you want to convey to your audience? Do you have a call-to-action? What is the best format to convey information (e.g., brochure, flier, insert, poster, or newsletter) and do you need multiple sizes (e.g., quarter, half, or full page)?

- What languages will be needed? Who will translate? Do you need to consider transcreating? (Transcreating goes beyond directly translating and considers tone, images, and cultural sensitivities.)

- Will you need images? Can you use photos from the FNS gallery. Do you have your own photographs or will you need to purchase stock photography? Will you develop original photography?

- When are the materials needed? Create a timeline and account for holidays. Determine clearance process. If materials are complex, multiple rounds of review should be considered in your timeline.

- Who will develop the written content? Does it require approvals? If so, by whom?

Tips & Tools

A **call-to-action** is what you want your audience to do with your information, such as call a certain toll-free number, go to a Web site, or attend an event.

- Who will design the materials? Do you have the software you need to do the design? Will you need to purchase a software program?

- Who will proofread and edit the materials?

- Will the resource be in black and white or multicolored? (Multi colored documents tend to cost more money.)

- How will they be duplicated or produced (desktop printer, copy shop or in-house copier, or commercial printer)?

- Where, how, and by whom will they be distributed?

- How will you incorporate organizational or program branding? Do you need to account for co-branding?

Step 2 Create a budget.

- List all of your items that require funding (e.g., writing and/or translation fees, photography, software, design, printing, postage, distribution fees, labels, etc.)

- If you have the funds to implement your plan, you are ready to go! If not, you will want to go back through your plan and see where you can cut costs. *NOTE: If you need to create original photography, you may need to budget talent costs.*

Step 3 Implement your plan.

Once you have developed your plan and timeline and set aside a budget, it's time to put your plan into action. Developing a material or resource can take some time and energy. If you are pulled in many directions, you may want to assign the task or get someone to help you.

How To Develop Written Materials

- Write for a low-literate audience. Keep text short, simple, and to the point. Stay focused on what's important to convey in the piece and remember to include your call-to-action.

- Make sure to place the contact name, phone number, toll-free number, and Web site in a prominent spot.

- If quoting someone, be sure to include name of the person, his or her title, and organization.

- Edit and proofread materials. Make sure to get someone else to proofread the draft.

- Test the materials with members of your audience, if possible – both in the draft and design stages. You can do this by giving them a copy of your material to read and asking them if it is easy to understand; or by reading your material to two to three people. Encourage your audience to feel comfortable making suggestions.

- Obtain approvals, if needed.

How To Design Materials

- What software, if any, will be used?

- Browse through similar materials to get ideas. Look at the materials on the FNS Web site for ideas.

- Design in the best format for your audience (size, length, orientation, kind of binding, if any).

- Will you include pictures, graphics, or recipes? These elements add life to your materials and capture the attention of your target audience, making them more likely to take the piece and read it.

- Consider fonts and sizes. For materials geared to seniors, use a larger size such as 12-point. This font size is also suggested for low-literate audiences. Use fonts that are easy to read such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman.

- Don't be afraid to use a lot of white space in your design—this is especially important for seniors. Don't develop materials that are too busy—your message will get lost.

- Use color. Your budget will determine how much color you can use.

- Create your layout. Sketch out ideas and play around with pictures, fonts, font sizes, color, shading, contrast, space, etc. If using color fonts, borders, pictures, etc., consider what color paper will be used.

- Is your message clear? How about your call-to-action and your brand?

- Promote those partnerships! More than one art image (logo) can be used.

- Check for accuracy. Proofread carefully for typos and grammatical or syntax errors, and make final edits before getting approvals.

- Obtain approvals, if needed.

How To Handle Duplication or Printing

- Run test copies to see if the layout needs to be revised.

- If submitting to a printing company, make sure directions are clear: communicate number of copies needed, dimensions, paper weight, paper color, and colors of ink. Specify packaging; for example, should materials be wrapped in specific quantities? Or perhaps it would be helpful to have single sheets bound as tear-offs in pads.

- Ask for proofs and approve them before the job is run. You may want to go to a press inspection to approve the product as it comes off the press.

⬇ **Download**

Check out the free photos at SNAP-Ed Photo Gallery *http://grande.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp_album.php*.

Also feel free to use the recipe finder at *http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/.*

Templates

The following Microsoft Word fill-in-the-blank templates are provided to help you develop your materials. You may also want to check out templates in desktop publishing software for newsletters, fliers, brochures, or other types of materials. Knowing your budget before you start is important as it can affect the design of your product.

These templates assume your State is using the new Federal name, SNAP. If your State is not using the new name, you should use your State name. The templates also allow you to pick and choose what information you might want to include in your materials.

If you plan to include specific eligibility information and you are crafting the language, you should share draft materials with your local SNAP office for comment. It is important to correctly present State rules to your audience. Also, your local office may have materials you can use to develop your text or give to your customers. Check this before you get started.

If your organization has a logo, insignia, or other unique identifier, you may want to use it with your materials when appropriate. If you are partnering with several organizations that have logos, you may also want to include those graphics in your document.

General SNAP Flier

Farmer's Market Features Local Chefs Demonstrating Healthy Foods, Free Tastings

What: [Insert name of event]

When: [Insert date and time of event]

Hosts: [List event sponsors]

Highlights: [Insert your message/what you want people to know]

Example: Come see cooking demonstrations with healthy, low-cost foods and learn how SNAP might help with your food budget. SNAP is the new name for the Federal Food Stamp Program—the Program that helps people with low incomes buy all sorts of foods such as fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk products.

Find out if you might be eligible and learn how to apply. In these tough times, you or someone you know might benefit from SNAP.

Location: [Insert address]

Directions: [Optional]

For more information call [Insert toll-free number] **or visit our Web site at** [Insert local Web address]

Flier for Newly Unemployed

Location of SNAP Office and Steps To Apply

What is SNAP?
SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. It's the new name for the Federal Food Stamp Program. This program helps people who have lost their jobs eat right when money is tight.

How can I find out if I am eligible for benefits?
Go to [Insert local/State pre-screener Web site or http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/] or visit us at [Insert local event with date, time, and location, if applicable].

How can I get an application form?
Pick up an application form at [insert location of outreach provider or event] or at a local SNAP office. If your State has an online application form, you may use it or you can have a form mailed to you.

Can I get help filling out the application form?
If you need help completing the form, you can call [insert contact information for your organization, other outreach provider, or local SNAP office].

What papers should I bring to the interview with the SNAP worker?
The SNAP worker will need papers from you to verify your name, address, household income, and expenses. These might include your rent receipt, utility bill, child or elder care receipts, or pay stubs. The SNAP worker will calculate your household income and will subtract allowable expenses such as rent, utilities, child or elder care, or medical bills (if you are elderly or disabled) to determine how much food help you might be eligible to receive. Having the right documentation with you can speed up the process.

Questions?
[Insert name of contact, phone number, Web site, or event information. You may also want to provide local office information or distribute flier showing location(s) of local SNAP offices].

Location of SNAP office:
[Insert address, hours of operation, phone number, Web site, directions (optional)].

NOTE: Some local offices have more than one location. Your form should list only local offices that are part of your project. If your project will involve all local offices, please list the office locations, who should apply at what office (offices may be divided by ZIP code), and business hours. If possible, include local contact information for each office.

If there are multiple offices, you may want to develop a flier or insert showing above information.

Flier for Low-Income, Low-Literate Persons, p. 1

Need Money To Help Buy Food? Check Out SNAP.

What is SNAP?
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP [Insert name of your State Program, if SNAP name is not used], is the new name for the Federal Food Stamp Program. SNAP helps people with little or no income buy all sorts of foods including fruits and vegetables.

Can I get SNAP benefits?
- To receive benefits, your income and resources have to be under certain limits.

- People with lower incomes receive more benefits.

- When determining your income, the local SNAP office worker subtracts allowable expenses such as rent, utilities, child or elder care, or medical bills (if you are elderly or disabled) to find out how much food help you will get.

- Resources include the amount of money you have in bank accounts.

- [Insert State-specific information. Your State may be using broad-based categorical eligibility. You may wish to tailor communication for households receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)]

How can I tell if I might be eligible?
Go to [Insert local/State pre-screener Web site or http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/] or visit us at [Insert local event with date, time, and location, if applicable].

[Suggested language for prescreening tool: Answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. You will find out if you might be eligible and how much you could receive. The prescreening tool is not an application for SNAP benefits. To know for sure if you are eligible, you must fill out an application form and turn it in to your local office.]

Flier for Low-Income, Low-Literate Persons, p. 2

How do I apply for benefits?

- Get an application form from [insert information on where they can get form].

- Fill out the application form as best as you can.

  [Optional: You may wish to offer assistance here and provide information on your organization.]

  [Optional: You might remind the applicant to be sure to put his/her name and address on the application and sign it, and advise him or her to fill out at least the first page and leave it at the local office—doing this starts the application process.]

- Return the application to the local office by mailing, faxing, or bringing it in, or applying online (in some States).

- Arrange for an interview with a SNAP worker.

  [Optional: Include information such as use of authorized representatives or telephone interviews.]

- Bring papers to the interview such as pay stubs, rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, child or elder care bills, and child support court orders. At the interview, the SNAP worker may ask you for other papers.

If I am approved, what can I expect?
Once the SNAP worker has all of your information, you will be told if you are approved or denied.

If approved, you will be told how much you will receive and you will get an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to use when buying groceries at the store.

Questions?
[Insert name of contact, phone number, Web site, or event information. You may also want to provide local office information or distribute flier showing location(s) of local SNAP offices].

How do I find my local SNAP office?
Location of SNAP office:

[Insert address, hours of operation, phone number, Web site, directions (optional)]

NOTE: Some local offices have more than one location. Your form should list only local offices that are part of your project. If your project will involve all local offices, please list the office locations, who should apply at what office (offices may be divided by ZIP code), and business hours. If possible, include local contact information for each office.

If there are multiple offices, you may want to develop a flier or insert showing above information.

General SNAP Inserts

Inserts can be used by any entity in mailings, advertisements, and bulletins such as:

- utility or phone bills;
- church or other bulletins;
- payroll checks or stubs;

- advertising fliers, or
- backpacks of children.

Do you need help paying for groceries? SNAP might be able to help.

(Optional) The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP (State name if not called SNAP), helps people with low income buy all sorts of foods, including fruits and vegetables.

For more information about SNAP [enter local or State toll-free number or other contact information and local Web site address].

Do you or does someone you know need help paying for groceries? SNAP might be the answer.

(Optional) The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP (State name if not called SNAP), helps people with low income buy all sorts of foods, including fruits and vegetables.

If you or someone you know has low income or has recently lost his or her job, call for information (enter local or State toll-free number or other information and local Web site address).